

Social Media Policy

J&V Activity Buddies

Organisation: J&V Activity Buddies

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1. Purpose

J&V Activity Buddies is committed to protecting the privacy, dignity, wellbeing, and rights of the people we support. This Social Media Policy provides clear guidance for all employees, volunteers, contractors, students, and anyone representing the organisation on the responsible use of social media.

The policy aims to:

- Protect the privacy and dignity of people receiving our services.
- Maintain professional standards and public trust.
- Ensure compliance with applicable legislation, including data protection requirements.
- Promote positive and inclusive engagement with the community.
- Reduce the risks associated with inappropriate use of social media.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Agency staff
- Students and work placement staff
- Directors
- Anyone acting on behalf of J&V Activity Buddies

It covers both:

- Official J&V Activity Buddies social media accounts.
- Personal social media accounts where organisational matters may be discussed or where an individual's connection to the organisation is identifiable.

Examples of platforms include:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- TikTok
- X (formerly Twitter)
- YouTube
- Threads
- WhatsApp Communities
- Snapchat
- Blogs
- Online forums

3. Our Values

Everything shared online should reflect the values of J&V Activity Buddies:

- Respect
- Inclusion
- Compassion
- Professionalism
- Equality
- Dignity
- Integrity
- Confidentiality
- Safeguarding

4. Official Social Media Accounts

Only authorised individuals may:

- Create organisational social media accounts.
- Publish content.
- Respond to comments or messages.
- Speak on behalf of J&V Activity Buddies.

All organisational social media accounts remain the property of J&V Activity Buddies.

Passwords must be securely managed and changed whenever authorised users leave the organisation or no longer require access.

5. Appropriate Content

Official social media content should:

- Promote inclusion and accessibility.
- Celebrate achievements with appropriate consent.
- Highlight activities and community involvement.
- Share organisational news and events.
- Promote recruitment opportunities.
- Provide accurate information about services.
- Reflect the values of J&V Activity Buddies.

Content should always be:

- Accurate
- Respectful
- Inclusive
- Professional
- Accessible

6. Confidentiality

Staff must never disclose confidential information relating to:

- People we support
- Families or carers
- Staff members
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Care or support plans
- Medical information
- Incident reports
- Financial information
- Safeguarding concerns
- Internal investigations

Confidentiality obligations continue after employment or volunteering ends.

7. Privacy of People We Support

Protecting the dignity and privacy of individuals is a core responsibility.

Staff must never:

- Share names without consent.
- Publish photographs without written consent.
- Share videos without written consent.
- Identify an individual's disability, diagnosis, or personal circumstances without explicit permission.
- Share details of care or support plans.
- Discuss incidents involving service users.
- Reveal addresses or locations.
- Tag people receiving support on social media.

8. Consent

Before publishing any photograph, video, or personal story involving someone supported by J&V Activity Buddies, the organisation must obtain:

- Written informed consent.
- Consent from a parent, guardian, or legal representative where appropriate.
- A signed media consent form.

Consent may be withdrawn at any time. Where practical, content will be removed promptly following withdrawal of consent.

9. Safeguarding

Social media must never compromise safeguarding responsibilities.

Employees and volunteers must not:

- Communicate privately with people receiving support through personal social media accounts.
- Accept friend or follow requests from people receiving support unless specifically authorised by management and appropriate to their role.
- Share personal contact details.
- Arrange meetings through personal social media.
- Discuss safeguarding matters online.

Any safeguarding concern identified online must be reported immediately using the organisation's safeguarding procedures.

10. Professional Boundaries

Professional boundaries must always be maintained.

Staff should not:

- Use personal accounts to provide support services.
- Engage in online arguments.
- Become involved in personal disputes with people supported by the organisation.
- Post content while angry or emotionally distressed.
- Publish material that could damage the reputation of J&V Activity Buddies.

11. Personal Social Media Use

J&V Activity Buddies respects employees' private use of social media.

However, employees must not:

- Suggest they are speaking on behalf of the organisation unless authorised.
- Share confidential information.
- Bully or harass colleagues or service users.
- Make discriminatory, offensive, or abusive comments.
- Damage the organisation's reputation through inappropriate online conduct.

Employees who identify themselves as working for J&V Activity Buddies should make it clear that personal opinions are their own.

Example:

"The views expressed on this account are my own and do not represent those of my employer."

12. Photography and Video

Photographs and videos taken during work activities should only be captured using approved organisational devices unless prior authorisation has been given.

Personal mobile phones should not be used to photograph or film people receiving support.

All images must be securely stored in accordance with the organisation's Data Protection Policy.

13. Accessibility

J&V Activity Buddies is committed to accessible communication.

Where possible, social media content should include:

- Plain English.
- Alternative text (alt text) for images.
- Captions for videos.
- Clear, readable language.
- Inclusive terminology.
- Accessible graphics where appropriate.

14. Respectful Communication

The organisation encourages respectful online interaction.

J&V Activity Buddies will not tolerate:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hate speech
- Racism
- Sexism
- Homophobia
- Transphobia
- Disability discrimination
- Threatening or abusive behaviour
- Defamation

Inappropriate comments may be hidden, deleted, or reported.

15. Responding to Negative Comments

Authorised staff responding on behalf of the organisation should:

- Remain calm and professional.
- Be courteous.
- Correct factual inaccuracies where appropriate.
- Avoid arguments.
- Refer formal complaints to the organisation's Complaints Procedure.
- Never disclose confidential information.

16. Crisis Communications

Only authorised spokespersons may comment publicly during serious incidents or emergencies.

Staff must not make public statements regarding:

- Safeguarding investigations
- Serious incidents
- Deaths
- Legal proceedings
- Police investigations
- Regulatory inspections
- Major complaints

17. Copyright

Employees must:

- Respect copyright laws.
- Use only authorised images, music, and media.
- Credit creators where required.
- Obtain permission before sharing copyrighted material.

18. Data Protection

All social media activity must comply with applicable data protection legislation and the organisation's Data Protection and Confidentiality Policies.

Personal information must only be shared where lawful, appropriate, and authorised.

19. Monitoring

J&V Activity Buddies reserves the right to monitor:

- Official social media accounts.
- Public references to the organisation.
- Compliance with this policy.

Monitoring will always be lawful, proportionate, and respectful of individual privacy.

20. Reporting Concerns

Employees should immediately report:

- Confidentiality breaches
- Safeguarding concerns
- Fake accounts impersonating the organisation
- Cyberbullying
- Online abuse directed at staff or people we support
- Security concerns

Concerns should be reported to:

- Line Manager
- Registered Manager (where applicable)
- Safeguarding Lead
- Data Protection Lead

21. Breaches of this Policy

Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- Informal management action
- Additional training
- Removal of access to organisational social media accounts
- Formal disciplinary action
- Referral to professional bodies where appropriate
- Referral to statutory authorities if legislation has been breached

22. Training

J&V Activity Buddies will provide staff with training on:

- Social media awareness
- Safeguarding
- Confidentiality
- Data protection
- Cyber security
- Professional boundaries

Training will be refreshed regularly.

23. Responsibilities

Managers

Managers are responsible for:

- Promoting compliance with this policy.
- Providing guidance to staff.
- Investigating concerns.
- Ensuring appropriate training is completed.

Employees and Volunteers

Employees and volunteers are responsible for:

- Following this policy.
- Protecting confidentiality.
- Maintaining professional boundaries.
- Reporting concerns promptly.
- Representing the organisation professionally.